



Michigan



We're making progress.

Michigan's Direct Support Professionals (sometimes known as Direct Care Workers) are closer to earning a competitive wage, thanks to increased funding by the people of our state.

The FY 2022 Michigan budget includes a permanent \$2.35 per hour wage increase for DSPs, which helps them continue providing much-needed personal care, training, emotional support and respite to an estimated 100,000 of Michigan's most vulnerable residents.

DSPs provide essential support to help people with mental illness and developmental disabilities live as independently as possible. They help keep families strong by providing practical care that is customized, needs-based, and innovative.

In today's labor market, however, it's extremely challenging for Michigan families to attract and retain the talented DSPs they urgently need. When fast-food and retail chains offer \$18+ hourly salaries—complete with signing bonuses—it's tough for a DSP who's being paid much less to justify continuing in their current work.

The result? Families are in crisis, quitting their jobs to care for loved ones themselves. Aging parents with diminishing physical strength are spending day and night tending to the needs of their adult children with illness and disabilities. Providers of supports to individuals with disabilities face a similar staffing crisis. People are going without the services they urgently need.

Michigan can—and must—keep doing better by its DSPs.

As any DSP will tell you, it's not just about the money. There are other steps Michigan can take to stabilize and advance the profession well beyond the basic level of fast-food or retail work. In addition to ensuring adequate compensation, we recommend the development of a Direct Care Worker statute that includes:

- Mandatory spending that is annually earmarked and tied to inflation;
- A special fund to support direct care worker training programs, ongoing professional development and the annual expense of DSP certifications; and
- Career pathways that can help workers grow and advance in the profession.

Our membership will continue to advocate for the value being added by Michigan DSPs, recognizing it's not just about the resources—it's also about ensuring the work is appropriately recognized for its intellectual and physical demands.

We look forward to working with MDHHS and other state policy leaders to build a framework capable of supporting all Michigan residents in ways that make sense.